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AN ADDRESS

TO THE

TENTH CONVENTION

3544.140

OF THE EASTERN DIOCESE,

DELIVERED IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, IN BOSTON, SEPTEMRER 28th, A.D. 1825.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND

ALEXANDER VIETTS GRISWOLD, D. D.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED FROM THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

True and Greene, Printers.

1825.

From Pfsh. vol. 220

97825
Oct. 30, 1869

ADDRESS.

Brethren beloved, and Christian friends,

THROUGH the Lord's patient goodness, we are advanced another year in the important work committed to our hands. The view of our labours, and the present state of this Diocese, which it is now my duty to lay before you, may be comprised in few words; for my principal journey in the visitation of our Churches has for several reasons been postponed till after the meeting of this Convention. A considerable number of them, however, have been already visited, and a very few, seventy-two only, have been confirmed. Several of our candidates have been dismissed to other parts of our country. Those admitted during the year past are Robert B. Drane, Henry H. Oliver, Joseph H. Coit, Alexander H. Codwise, More Bingham, John Bristed, Jared Rice, Frederic C. R. Greene, Gustavus A. Dewitt, and Henry Goodwin.

Three only, George Richardson, Thomas S. W. Mott, and Daniel L. B. Goodwin, have been admitted to the Order of Deacons; and the Rev. Joseph Muencher, Benjamin C. Cutler, and Theodore Edson, Deacons, have been ordained Priests. The Rev. Lot Jones, the Rev. Elijah Brainerd, the Rev. Jasper Adams, and the Rev. John J. Robertson have taken letters dismissory from this Diocese.

It has pleased the Father of mercies to continue his blessing to this portion of his people; prosperity has generally attended our labours; while some few occurrences of an unpleasant nature remind us of our sins and our dependence. In this State, (of Massachusetts,) several of our Churches have increased in their members, and some addition has been made to their number. In East Chelmsford is a large and beautiful village, which has sprung up with astonishing rapidity, and in it the Merrimac Manufactur-

ing Company, with a liberality which does honour to themselves and to their country, have erected an elegant and very commodious church, and made bountiful provision for religious instruction, and all the Gospel ministrations. Should the like liberal policy, and religious care become general in our manufacturing establishments, their tendency will not be (what is so complained of in other countries,) to ignorance, degeneracy and vice ; but ours will be nurseries of neatness and industry, and schools of religious improvement. In such establishments, a pious, faithful, stated minister of Christ would be highly useful, as a restraint upon vice, a superintendent of morals, and a teacher not only of religious truth, but of many other profitable things. Much useful instruction, of various kinds, he might give the people during the six days of labour ; and this the more, because his ordinary parochial duties would be comparatively less. But chiefly on the Lord's Day would such a faithful labourer be of incalculable benefit ; not only in his preaching, exhortation, and publick prayers, but still more in promoting, superintending, and regulating Sunday Schools. These schools may be made highly beneficial in every parish ; but in manufacturing villages, where there are many children and youth, and a large part of them necessarily occupied through all the labouring hours of the week, Sunday Schools are of peculiar and very great advantage. And this, too, is a subject which has particular claims on us of the Episcopal Church. There is no other denomination of Christians whose religious system embraces, in equal degree, the instruction of children and youth, and attaches equal importance to bringing them up in the Christian faith. If we are true to our own principles and practice, according to what we profess, we may, among these establishments especially, be more beneficial to the social community than any other Christians. Even our divine service, or publick worship, is itself a profitable school for the young, teaching the worship of God, and the knowledge of the Scriptures, and also reading and good behaviour.

On the 16th day of March, the new edifice in Chelmsford, called St. Ann's Church, was solemnly dedicated to the honour and worship of Almighty God. The sermon was highly interesting and delightful ; and was rendered much more so by the patient and respectful attendance of a numerous and very respectable

congregation, collected from various parts ; and a large choir of singers, whose excellent performance of several psalms and pieces of musick, added not only to the pleasure, but, it is believed, to the edification of the exercises. To one gentleman, especially, and his pious lady, we are, under God, much indebted, for the establishment of a Church in that place. May the Lord remember them for good. The Rev. Mr. Edson is the minister of that Church.

By the pious liberality, and generous aid of another gentleman, who is second to none in contributing to the support of publick worship, the Rev. Mr. Goodwin is now officiating in Sutton, with a good prospect of usefulness. The people of the small parish in Ashfield are engaged in building a church : considering their scanty means, it is a noble proof of their piety and zeal, and during this arduous effort especially, they merit all the missionary aid which the low state of our funds, and the urgent claims of others, will admit of our giving them.

With much pleasure I also add, that in consequence of the subscription generously set on foot, and liberally filled, for repairing the church in Cambridge, we may hope soon to see that edifice in a condition suitable for recommencing the Gospel ministrations within its sacred walls. And I scarce need remind you, that the speedy establishment of a pious and able minister in that parish is an object of much importance, not only to our Church in this Diocese, and throughout the United States, but to the prosperity of that University, which is the pride of our country, and to the general publick good. The permanent settlement of a faithful pastor in that station, will, we cannot doubt, be a powerful inducement to Episcopalians, to send their sons thither for education. We may therefore with some confidence hope, that a liberal publick will aid us in supplying the means of such an establishment. The Rev. Mr. Mott is officiating in Marblehead, and the hope still remains, that the parish there may yet be restored to a reputable standing among our Churches.

But to this general prosperity in the field of our labours, there is one very deplorable exception. St. Paul's Church in this city, which, through the zealous labours of its highly respected pastor, and the very liberal contributions and generous efforts of the proprietors, had, for several years, been rapidly increasing, has,

in the last few months, been much agitated ; and continues in a very unsettled state. A controversy arose between the minister and the vestry of that Church, partly from unfavourable circumstances which were not foreseen, and could not, perhaps, be avoided. Some months since, the wardens, vestry and proprietors made application, according to the provisions of the 32d canon of the general Convention, requesting that there might be a dissolution of the sacerdotal connexion between them and their Rector. Accordingly, the Presbyters of the state were notified, and desired to meet in council. To this summons, they gave very prompt regard, and much to their praise, patiently attended through the long investigation. In the morning of the last day of the council's sitting, after they had made known to the parties their advice, that there should be a separation, and before the question, *on what terms* was decided, I was summoned home by a very mournful event in my family : and the council obligingly consented to continue the business.

After hearing from the Rector, by his counsel, his claims to a large compensation ; and from the vestry the reasons why they ought, in equity, to give, if any thing, but little, the sum to be given was fixed at 5000 dollars. This decision they directed their secretary to make known to me, leaving it with me, if I approved, to make known the result to the parties. To avoid all ground of misunderstanding, it seemed necessary that I should designate the time when the money must be paid. Considering, from well known circumstances, that to require the immediate payment of so large a sum would be likely to ruin the parish ; and also that the sum specified was the salary of two years, I directed the time of payment to be when, according to the most general usage, such a salary would become due ; one half at the end of one year, and the remainder at the expiration of two years. With this part of the decision especially, Dr. Jarvis has expressed himself much dissatisfied, and has given it as his principal reason for not conceding to what I deem the advice of the council. I have endeavoured to do what I believed to be most agreeable to the principles of the Christian faith ; most honourable to the clerical profession, and most likely to promote the good of the Church. If I have erred, your counsel and aid will be the more necessary in our subsequent proceedings. Owing to a mistake of mine, not necessary now to

be explained, the communication of the result was too long delayed ; and it so happened, that when it was made, it was necessarily done in so short a time, that I could not examine the words of the canon : which it is hoped will be accepted as an apology for any incorrectness in the language of my communication to the parties. The meaning was correct ; it was intended to impart, not the command, but the advice of the council.

In Rhode Island, the four largest Churches continue to be blest with the smiles of heaven. The services of the Rev. Mr. Alden, in East Greenwich, are discontinued ; and the Rev. Mr. Burge has informed me of his intention to leave St. Paul's, in North Kingston. There is still a field for missionary labours in that state, which, it is hoped, will not long continue altogether neglected.

While speaking of Rhode Island, there is a propriety in my observing, generally, that few things can be more injurious to the general interests of religion, or more hurtful to our Church in this Diocese particularly, than exciting sectional prejudices, and undermining that confidence which we ought to have in all our Christian brethren. Hitherto, considering that we are thinly scattered over many states, the union which a merciful God has given us, has been very remarkable, and demands our daily gratitude and praise. Let us not inconsiderately dash such a cup of blessing from our hands. Let us be sure that others have sinned against God, and that he has called us to be their accusers, before we presume to *cast the stone.* Nothing is easier, if we will indulge a strong propensity of corrupt nature, from a difference of opinion in the most trivial things, to blow up the devouring flame of a sectarian spirit. Already are heard amongst Episcopalians the discordant sounds of party distinctions, which every friend of our Church should exercise his utmost prudence to oppose. Jealousy and crimination are the fuel which most fatally feeds the flame of discord, and are the opposite of that charity which "thinketh no evil." So blessed are the fruits of "a meek and quiet spirit," we scarce need be told by the pen of inspiration, that it "is in the sight of God of great price." When we consider further, how powerfully the *citadel* of the Christian faith is assailed, needless feuds among its defenders would seem as that infatuation which is the harbinger of ruin.

In New Hampshire, the state of our Churches has not materially changed. The parish in Hopkinton is still destitute of a minister. The Rev. Mr. Richardson resides in Claremont, and officiates in that vicinity.

In Vermont, the Church has still powerful obstacles to contend with ; but the prospect continues to brighten, and true religion, we trust, to increase. Our clergy are becoming more attentive to the wants of that part of the Lord's vineyard. But nine years ago, there was not a church (edifice) in that state properly ours. Since, there have been seven already consecrated ; and two more, (in Sheldon and St. Alban's,) it is expected, the Lord permitting, will, within a few days, be added to their number. The Rev. Mr. Covell has officiated at St. Alban's during the most of the year last past. The Rev. Mr. Olney intends soon to leave the Church in Gardiner, in the state of Maine. With pleasure I add, that in several parts of the Diocese are missionary societies, which merit much praise.

It will be suitable here to mention, that the Rev. Mr. Carter, from the Diocese of New York, has been regularly appointed by the Standing Committee of the General Theological Seminary, "the Agent for procuring subscriptions in the Eastern Diocese," and is now amongst us. Some sanction and recommendation from this Convention would add to his confidence in soliciting subscriptions, and facilitate his success. That seminary, we have good reason to hope, will be of general utility. And as it is not the intention of the General Convention, (so far as I have known its intention,) to debar any state or Diocese of its privilege or right to establish any school or seminary within its own limits, and under its own controul, I can see no reasonable objection to patronizing that in New York.

As our clergy and laity are supposed to be either present or represented in this Convention of the Diocese, it seems the most suitable, for us it is certainly the most convenient occasion, for the performance of the duties required of me in the 23d canon : for offering annually such advice to my respected brethren of the ministry, as may seem to me worthy of their attention ; and of addressing the people of the Diocese on some points of Christian doctrine, worship, or manners. These meetings of our Churches in council, are favourable opportunities for devising and recommending

means and measures for increasing the number, and improving the state of our Churches. It is to be supposed, that we all desire and think it our duty to do whatever we can do to advance the Redeemer's kingdom ; to promote true religion. We of the clergy especially, must feel a deep concern in knowing how this great work may best be promoted ; how we "may finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." I am well aware that you may justly "say to me this proverb : physician heal thyself ;" that I have need to receive, rather than to give, counsel and exhortation. But the office which I fill, and which I well know might be better filled, constrains me to notice some things, which are too much neglected among us, or might be better performed. Some, perhaps, will deem them trivial things ; but their effect is vast and serious. It is chiefly from inattention to what are thought small things, that Episcopalians are so generally supposed to be more deficient in pious zeal and religious feeling than other Christians. In things of greater notoriety, we have naturally more regard to decency and reputation. True piety, like good manners, is better seen in smaller matters. I should not be faithful to you, nor to our divine Master, nor to his Church, did I not sound the trumpet, and give warning, when danger appears. If we, who are watchmen in Zion, are united in our labours, and are faithful in all, even the minutest duties, how can we doubt, that with such advantages, as through the Lord's blessing, we possess, his work will prosper in our hands.

It is a circumstance much encouraging to greater exertions, and more zealous efforts, that a considerable number of young men have recently entered, or are about to enter, into Holy Orders, whom we may well believe, the Lord has called to this ministry; who appear to be sincerely devoted to his service. And not in this Diocese only, but throughout the United States, there is pleasing evidence that our clergy, as a body, are increasing in piety and holy zeal.

Permit me then, first, to recommend to every minister of Christ, who has a parochial charge, to ascertain accurately who are properly under his pastoral care ; and, as a faithful shepherd, to watch over every soul, seeing that each one has his portion of

meat in due season. Though we are ever so constant, and orthodox, and faithful in our publick teaching, our work is but half done, and the better half remains. We must watch over them individually, and teach them from house to house. The wise physician does not think it sufficient to give general rules for restoring and preserving health ; he visits the sick individually ; he learns the particular case of every patient, and prescribes such remedies as each requires. We must be *pastors* as well as *rectors*. The minister of Christ must, far as in him lies, make himself acquainted with the religious state of every individual that belongs to his parish, and do all that he can do " to bring all such as are, or shall be committed to his charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ," that none shall remain in viciousness and errour. This reason requires ; the Scriptures clearly teach it ; and it is solemnly enjoined upon each of us at the time of our ordination. And were we all, my brethren, more faithful in this one point, our Church would shine with renovated life. They who are Christians in name, would be better Christians in heart and life : and numbers, eager to be under the care of such faithful shepherds, would come into the Church.

In order to cultivate and increase social and religious intercourse among our clergy, I would further recommend, as often and as much as other duties will admit, that they meet and associate together as friends and brethren of the Lord's household ; that they carefully avoid all jealousies and unfriendly party feelings ; if misunderstandings happen, and they sometimes will happen, that with frankness and candour they be immediately obviated and removed ; that we may all be cemented together, in perfect Christian love. Shall not we, who are joint ambassadors of the world's Redeemer, and commissioned of the Almighty to save the souls of men, " dwell together in unity ?" By *religious* intercourse, I mean that we should associate together, not merely to enjoy the pleasures of friendship and hospitality, but chiefly to promote the knowledge of Christ, and practice of religion ; that we often unite in lectures, and in prayer for ourselves and others ; and for God's blessing upon our ministry. We should bear with meekness, and give with love, as occasion may require, exhortation and reproof ;

encouraging and strengthening each other in every duty. We should consult together respecting the spiritual wants of our flocks ; and devise the best means, and use all proper efforts, to promote true godliness. This was much practiced in the primitive and best times of the Church : and I submit it to your serious reflection, whether, if it were more practiced by us, it would not be likely to result in the increase of brotherly affection, and of pure and undefiled religion.

But the utmost efforts of the clergy to awaken a more lively sense, and holy practice of religion, will avail but little, without the co-operation of their brethren of the laity. The treasure of our ministry, though highly valuable, is given in earthen vessels ; we are but weak instruments, though in the hands of God. Except the hand of Moses be supported, his weary arm will sink, and the enemy prevail. The difficulties and the labours of this ministry are greater and more arduous than is generally believed or thought of. St. Paul will best tell you what they have to perform, and what to endure, who are faithful in this work ; and also what honour and support should be rendered to those especially who rule well, and labour faithfully in word and doctrine.

We are best honoured, and most encouraged, when the people give due regard to all our ministrations ; when they hear the word of truth from our lips, and let it shine in their lives. As Christians are all members of one body, it is essential to health and vigour, that every member should do its office. They who are appointed wardens and vestrymen in our parishes, have it in their power to do much for the promotion of religion. The delegates to our Conventions have an important trust committed to their care, which they should faithfully execute.

If Episcopalians (who, compared with other denominations, are certainly not poor,) were more generally liberal in giving to publick religious uses, it would be much to the honour of our Church, and promote its prosperity. There are individuals, and indeed some parishes of our communion, who in this are worthy of the highest praise. But generally it is thought, and I fear with too much reason, that in such contributions we are much behind others ; and if such be the fact, we must expect also to fall behind in the increase of our Churches. If, especially, they who are rich

would, whilst they live, or at least in their wills, devote to the honour of God some part of the wealth which he lends them, it would tend to no evil, and be productive of very much good.—Their children, if they have children, would probably be more blessed and prosperous; they would, by such benefactions, judiciously bestowed, be doing good in this world through years and centuries after their decease, and probably increase their own happiness through eternal ages. Funds too thus given for publick good, and religious use, add to the wealth of the country, especially when not given in lands; they are generally so much wealth saved from prodigality, or unnecessary expense, and laid up for the benefit of society in a permanent fund; they are a *savings bank* on the largest scale.

If we desire the blessing of God; if we would see our Churches increase in numbers and piety, it is of immense importance that the forms of religion be suitably regarded in our families. Our children should not only be early dedicated to the Lord in baptism: but brought up in his nurture and admonition. Family prayer, which we fear is much neglected, should be generally performed. They who have been baptized, should never forget that the oath of God is upon them; and what mercies were sealed to their benefit "by the washing of regeneration." And they should desire above all things, "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." By a serious consideration of the nature of Baptism, through God's blessing they may be prepared for confirmation, which should never be inconsiderately received, nor too long delayed. Much injury has been done to religion, and much discredit brought upon our Church, by admitting, and even urging to confirmation, those who have no true repentance or faith, nor any serious regard for religion. The ordinance itself which, when rightly used, is of inestimable benefit, has, in consequence of this laxity, "become a hissing and a bye-word." No one need be told that confirmation is a voluntary ratification of the baptismal covenant, and is considered by the Church as preparatory to the Lord's Supper. Of course, what is necessary to qualify adults for Baptism and the Eucharist, is also necessary for receiving confirmation.

It is also highly important to the honour and prosperity of our Church, that they who come to our communion, should, in all

other respects, live as Christians. To us who minister in these sacred things, it is painful to see any, who believe that Christ only is their Saviour, neglect to do in remembrance of him, what he commanded; and we are induced sometimes to be very urgent, that you will not deny yourselves the inestimable benefits of that ordinance; but it gives us greater pain to see those who feast on his body and blood, by their vain or wicked lives, "crucify him afresh."

It is also necessary to the increase of true religion, to make it an object of serious concern, kept ever in view. This will appear in our making it often the subject of private conversation; in which I fear we are very generally and culpably deficient. *Religious conversation* is a thing quite different from *conversing about religion.* We may talk of all the externals of Christianity, and the visible performance of its duties, without manifesting in ourselves, or imparting to others, any thing of its spirituality. If, like the psalmist, we *speak because we believe;* if we delight to *tell what the Lord has done for our soul;* if our conversation be of the mercies of God; of the character and the love of Christ; of the work of his redemption, and the doctrines of his cross, it is truly religious. No one can justly call this affectation; for if we indeed believe these things, so very interesting, so infinitely important, how can we refrain from speaking of them? Do not "all sorts and conditions of men" speak very much of those things which are near their hearts, and much in their minds? I would not that you should "cast your pearls before swine;" or that you should introduce religious discourse at unseasonable times. But if we are indeed the disciples of that Saviour, whom we preach in the Gospel, and who has done such things to save us, we must be strangely inconsistent if it be not our chief object, our greatest desire, to honour him; to enlarge his kingdom and magnify his mercies.

I am no advocate for enthusiasm; in our Church, indeed, we are not likely to be much troubled with it. But let us not "put light for darkness, or good for evil;" let us not call religion enthusiasm. A greater compliment cannot well be made to any sect, than Episcopalians often make to one, in branding every thing serious, ardent, and spiritual in religion with the name of

Methodism ; it has had, as we might expect, not a little effect, in recommending and promoting real Methodism.

Another thing which, in my judgment, will tend very much to the increase of our communion, and the last which I shall mention, is the cultivation of love and harmony among all Christian people. In the present state of religion, few things, if any, are, in practice, more difficult, than the wise and just regulation of our conduct towards the various sects of Christians. We must follow after charity ; and yet we must maintain truth. There is scarce one thing that can be named, peculiar to the Gospel of Christ, which is not by some, calling themselves Christians, rejected or denied. To say that these differences are unessential, is virtually saying that nothing is essential ; that we may believe or disbelieve any thing without danger to our souls. We must contend earnestly for that faith, which, according to our best judgment, was delivered to the saints by inspiration of God. At all proper times, and in every suitable way, we must shew that we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ; that we glory in the saving doctrines of his cross ; and not the less, because to the Jews they are a stumbling block, and to the wise men of this world foolishness. But let us not, in maintaining the doctrines, depart from the spirit of Christianity. The pride of orthodoxy is, perhaps, the worst sort of spiritual pride. Let us not "judge another man's servant," nor think too highly of ourselves, but hold the truth in meekness, humility, and fear. It is infinitely more profitable to notice our own faults than the faults of others. By endeavouring constantly and chiefly to correct what is wrong in ourselves, we shall promote holiness, charity, and peace. A haughty, censorious spirit leads to confusion, and every evil work. Let our love be without dissimulation. True liberality is to be seen, not in our profession, but in our conduct. Words may be "softer than oil ;" and yet in their object and tendency be "drawn swords." Men may speak plausibly, and declaim earnestly against illiberality and uncharitableness, with the artful design of stigmatizing others, and exalting themselves : let such conduct with detestation be avoided. "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." The best we can do towards reforming the world, is to reform ourselves ; to endeavour

more and more to be and do whatever God requires of those who would be saved in Christ forever. If we have the spirit of Christ; if we indeed possess and feel that love for all men, which he so positively requires of his disciples, we shall naturally manifest it by doing good, as we have opportunity, to all men, and especially to them who are of the household of faith.

Finally, brethren, if God shall let us alone this year also; if through the Lord's indulgent goodness, our lives and labours shall be prolonged through another annual revolution of fleeting time, let us pray, and let us endeavour, that we may be more faithful than in years past; and that we may again meet together under brighter circumstances of peace and prosperity.

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